

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 GENEVA 4717

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SUBJ: ILO - 63RD SESSION, SECRETARY MARSHALL'S JUNE 13 SPEECH

1. FOLLOWING IS SPEECH GIVEN BY LABOR SECRETARY MARSHALL
TO ILO 63RD INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE, JUNE 13, 1977:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

SPEECH BY SECRETARY OF LABOR F. RAY MARSHALL
TO THE 63RD INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND JUNE 13, 1977

MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED TO CONVEY TO YOU MY SINCERE
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE 63RD
INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE. I ALSO CONGRATULATE THE VICE-
PRESIDENTS ON THEIR ELECTIONS.

"TECHNICAL COOPERATION," THE THEME OF THE DIRECTOR-
GENERAL'S REPORT THIS YEAR, IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE
UNITED STATES. FOR MANY YEARS MY COUNTRY HAS URGED THE ILO TO
FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BRING TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO
WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THIS IS NOT TO MINIMIZE THE
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IMPORTANCE OF THE ILO'S WELL-KNOWN STANDARD-SETTING AND
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. BUT WE HAVE CONTINUALLY STRESSED THAT
THE ILO SHOULD DEVELOP CONCRETE PLANS TO ALLEVIATE MORE
EFFECTIVELY UNEMPLOYMENT AND OTHER SERIOUS LABOR PROBLEMS
CONFRONTING ALL NATIONS.

WE IN THE UNITED STATES BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY IN INTER-

NATIONAL COOPERATION. WE LIVE IN AN ERA WHEN THE PROBLEMS FACING MANKIND EXTEND BEYOND NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF LABOR PROBLEMS. ECONOMIC DECISIONS MADE BY ONE COUNTRY CAN HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS ELSEWHERE. MANY LABOR MARKETS ARE BECOMING INTERNATIONAL IN SCOPE, BECAUSE IT IS INCREASINGLY COMMON FOR WORKERS TO SEEK JOBS OUTSIDE THEIR NATIVE LANDS. ANOTHER PROBLEM WE ALL FACE IS THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE SOURCES OF ENERGY. THIS PROBLEM WILL HAVE IMPORTANT EFFECTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND JOB CREATION EVERYWHERE.

THERE ARE NO SIMPLE ANSWERS TO ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS. BUT THE SOLUTION TO ALL OF THEM DEPENDS ON INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. WE ALL SHARE THE SAME NEED TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL PRODUCTIVE WORK FOR AN EVER-INCREASING LABOR FORCE. MY COUNTRY, LIKE MANY OTHERS, NEEDS TO DEVELOP JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS IN ORDER TO SLOW THE GROWTH OF OVER-CROWDED URBAN PLACES. WE ALSO NEED TO DESIGN PROGRAMS TO REDEVELOP CENTRAL CITIES AND OTHER AREAS PLAGUED WITH HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT. WE NEED MORE AND BETTER TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS. WE DO NOT HAVE ANSWERS TO ALL THESE PROBLEMS, BUT THROUGH MORE AND BETTER TECHNICAL COOPERATION WE CAN LEARN MUCH FROM OUR COMMON EXPERIENCES.

THE UNITED STATES HAS A LONG AND CONTINUING INTEREST IN MULTILATERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. SINCE 1946 MY COUNTRY HAS MADE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF OVER \$1.3 BILLION TO SUPPORT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS RELATED AGENCIES. THE 1978 CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED

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STATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WILL AMOUNT TO \$130 MILLION, A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OVER OUR 1977 CONTRIBUTION OF \$100 MILLION. MANY AMERICANS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE ILO.

BY HELDPING SOLVE EACH OTHER'S LABOR PROBLEMS, WE ADVANCE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF ALL PEOPLE. THIS IS THE ILO'S PRIMARY GOAL. THIS IS WHAT THE ILO WAS CREATED TO DO. AND IT IS A TRAGEDY OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS THAT THIS ORGANIZATION'S GOOD WORK HAS BEEN SO SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED BY VIOLATIONS OF ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES.

AS I AM SURE ALL OF YOU KNOW, MY GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER 1975 FILED A LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO. THAT LETTER WAS REAFFIRMED BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON MAY 27 OF THIS YEAR AND WILL TAKE EFFECT THIS COMING NOVEMEBER. OUR DECLARATION OF INTENTION STATES: "THE U.S. DOES NOT DESIRE TO LEAVE THE ILO. THE U.S. DOES NOT EXPECT TO DO SO. BUT WE DO INTEND TO

MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO PROMOTE THE CONDITIONS WHICH WILL FACILITATE OUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION. IF THIS SHOULD PROVE IMPOSSIBLE, WE ARE IN FACT PREPARED TO DEPART."

OUR POSITION IS A SIMPLE RECOGNITION THAT THE ILO, AFTER MORE THAN A HALF-CENTURY OF DEDICATED SERVICE, HAS REACHED A CROSSROAD. IF THE PATH CHOSEN LEADS TO THE CONTINUED DISAVOWAL OF ESTABLISHED AND EFFECTIVE PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES, SO BE IT. IF ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PATH LEADS TO A REAFFIRMATION OF THOSE PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES, WE STAND READY TO PURSUE WITH YOU THOSE GOALS WHICH THE ILO IS SO UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO HANDLE.

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THIS CONFERENCE IS CRUCIAL. WHICH PATH WILL WE CHOOSE? THE ISSUES ARE ALL HERE, IN THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE, IN THE STRUCTURE COMMITTEE, IN THE APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTIONS COMMITTEE, AND IN THE PLENARY. ANY DECISION IS FOR ALL OF US TO MAKE.

DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF, WE HAVE SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH A BASIS OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WITH MANY OF YOU THROUGH DIRECT CONTACTS. WE HAVE GENERALLY BEEN ENCOURAGED BY YOUR RESPONSE.

BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO ACCEPT PRIVATELY THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP WHILE PUBLICLY REJECTING THE PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES WHICH TRANSLATE THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES INTO EFFECTIVE ACTION. EXAMINE YOUR OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL FIND, AS WE DO, THAT THE TRUE VALUE

OF THE ILO IS IN ITS POSITIVE ROLE AS A VEHICLE FOR EXCHANGING
KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING PROGRESS IN THE SOCIAL AND LABOR FIELD,
AND NOT IN ITS MISUSE AS A POLITICAL TOOL.

AS A TECHNICAL ORGANIZATION, THE ILO IS ABLE TO MAKE A
UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
CONDITIONS OF WORKERS. IN THIS ROLE THE ILO CAN ALSO MAKE A
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CONTRIBUTION IN PROTECTING AND INCREASING FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN
RIGHTS, INCLUDING FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION. THE UNITED STATES HAS
STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE WORLD EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, WHICH IS
HELPING MAKE PLANNERS MORE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
EMPLOYMENT ASPECTS OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES. ILO
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HAVE
CONTRIBUTED WIDELY TO IMPROVED WORKER PRODUCTIVITY. THE ILO'S
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND WORKER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES HAVE
HELPED STRENGTHEN FREE WORKER AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS,
THEREBY AIDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FOSTERING SOCIAL
JUSTICE. ILO INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES PROVIDE MECHANISMS THROUGH
WHICH PROBLEMS CAN BE DISCUSSED AND WORKABLE REMEDIES PROPOSED.
THE ILO TECHNICAL PROGRAMS CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN HELPING
SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF WORKERS ON AN INTERNATIONAL, MULTILATERAL
BASIS.

THE NEED FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATH IS PARTICULARLY
APPARENT WHEN WE EXAMINE THE IMPORTANT AND LONG-STANDING LABOR
PROBLEMS WHICH REQUIRE CONTINUED ILO ATTENTION. UNEMPLOYMENT
AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT MUST BE REDUCED; UNSKILLED WORKERS MUST BE
TRAINED SO THEY CAN MAKE PRODUCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS. FREEDOM OF
ASSOCIATION OF ALL WORKERS MUST BE GUARANTEED; FORCED LABOR
MUST BE ELIMINATED, AND WORKERS MUST BE PROTECTED FROM HAZARDOUS
WORKING CONDITIONS. THERE MUST NOT ONLY BE A GREATER CONCERN
FOR JOB SAFETY, BUT AN INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE LONG-TERM
HEALTH PROBLEMS CAUSED BY MANY INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES. AS THE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT APTLY POINTS OUT, ON PAGE 41, "THE
CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH WORKERS PERFORM THEIR DAILY WORK ARE AT
THE HEART OF THE ILO'S MANDATE."

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE ILO'S EFFORTS TO HELP SOLVE THESE
LONG-STANDING PROBLEMS INCLUDE MANY ACTIVITIES IN ADDITION TO
TECHNICAL COOPERATION. SOME OF THESE ARE:

-- DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING LABOR STANDARDS THROUGH
CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS;
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-- DEVELOPING, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER UN AGENCIES,
POLICIES FOR PROMOTING WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT;
AND

-- COMPILING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER LABOR-RELATED
ISSUES.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION, HOWEVER, PROVIDES A FOCUS FOR ALL
OF THESE ACTIVITIES. IT ALSO PROVIDES A WAY OF FURNISHING
SERVICES TO COUNTRIES THAT NEED THEM THE MOST. KNOWLEDGE IS
OF LITTLE USE UNLESS IT IS DISSEMINATED WIDELY. AND DISSEMINATION
IS AN IMPORTANT ACTIVITY OF THE ILO.

REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
PROBLEMS FACING ALL OF US. MOST COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE,
INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, ARE EXPERIENCING INTOLLERABLY
HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. ALTHOUGH OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS DECLINED
FROM 8.1 TO 60 PERCENT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, IT IS STILL AT
AN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVEL. WE IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S
ADMINISTRATION BELIEVE THAT PUTTING PEOPLE TO WORK IS ONE OF
OUR MOST IMPORTANT AND URGENT TASKS.

PERHAPS A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE PROGRAMS WE
HAVE INITIATED TO COMBAT HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT WILL BE OF INTEREST
TO OTHER COUNTRIES FACING SIMILAR SITUATIONS.

ALTHOUGH HE GIVES PRIORITY TO STIMULATING THE PRIVATE
SECTOR, PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF
PRESIDENT CARTER'S ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE. BY THE END OF
THIS YEAR, WE WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE THE SIZE OF OUR PUBLIC
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM CREATING A TOTAL OF 725,000 JOBS, WHICH,
WITH TURNOVER, WILL PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT FOR OVER ONE MILLION
PEOPLE A YEAR. AS OUR ECONOMY IMPROVES, WE EXPECT MANY OF
THESE WORKERS TO MOVE INTO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHICH PROVIDES
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OVER 80 PERCENT OF ALL JOBS IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

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AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN OUR PUBLIC JOBS PROGRAM IS THE
RECOGNITION THAT LOCAL COMMUNITIES CAN BEST DECIDE WHAT NEEDS
TO BE DONE. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE DESIGNED A PROGRAM THAT
ALLOWS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS BASED
ON THEIR VARIED NEEDS.

IN OUR COUNTRY, AS I THINK IN EVERY COUNTRY IN THE
WORLD, THERE IS MUCH VALUABLE PUBLIC WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE
DONE. AND THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE WHO ARE
WILLING AND EAGER TO DO THIS WORK. THE SUCCESS OF ANY PUBLIC
JOBS PROGRAM IS TO MATCH THE JOBS THAT NEED TO BE DONE WITH
THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DO THEM.

IN ADDITION TO OUR LARGE PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS PROGRAM, WE
HAVE LAUNCHED SEVERAL INITIATIVES AIMED AT REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. WE HAVE LAUNCHED THESE INITIATIVES BECAUSE
IN THE UNITED STATES, AS IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, UNEMPLOYMENT
IS CONCENTRATED VERY HEAVILY AMONG WORKERS UNDER 24 YEARS OF
AGE. MANY OF THESE YOUNG WORKERS ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN JOBS
BECAUSE THEY LACK WORK EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS. OUR YOUTH EMPLOY-
MENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE THEREFORE DESIGNED TO FILL THIS
GAP. OUR PREFERENCE IS TO PROVIDE PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS BUT WE
BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS CAN SERVE
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A USEFUL FUNCTION WHENEVER PRIVATE JOBS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

LET ME ALSO BRIEFLY MENTION ANOTHER PRIORITY OF THE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. AND, IT IS THE NEED TO IMPROVE
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY. AS THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
CORRECTLY STATES, ON PAGE 42 OF HIS REPORT, "THE HIGH INCIDENCE
AND SEVERITY OF OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS AND DISEASES ALL OVER
THE WORLD REMAINS DISTURBING, CAUSING CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL
SUFFERING AND DEPRIVATION AS WELL AS LOSS OF OUTPUT." WE

SHARE THIS CONCERN BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WORKERS SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO RISK PERMANENT DAMAGE TO THEIR HEALTH AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A SEPARATE AGENCY TO DEAL WITH THIS VERY GRAVE PROBLEM. SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1971, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR'S OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF ALL AMERICANS. A MAJOR EMPHASIS OF THIS PROGRAM IS ON LONG-TERM HEALTH HAZARDS WHICH LEAD TO SERIOUS, AND SOMETIMES FATAL ILLNESS. WE ARE DEVELOPING STANDARDS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES AND THEY WILL GUIDE US IN OUR ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE OUR FINDINGS WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND WOULD WELCOME THE RESULTS OF SIMILAR RESEARCH IN OTHER NATIONS.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE ILO'S EFFORTS IN THIS AREA. THE ORGANIZATION'S PROPOSAL IN ITS 1978-79 BUDGET TO DEVELOP AN INTERNATIONAL SAFETY/HEALTH HAZARD WARNING SYSTEM WILL CERTAINLY BENEFIT WORKERS IN ALL COUNTRIES. WE ALSO CONSIDER THE ILO'S HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER (CIS) TO BE ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE SOURCES OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION. CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH THE ILO IS EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT TO US AS WE INCREASE OUR EFFORTS IN THIS COMPLEX AREA.

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO TURN TO SOME OF THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION. OUR OWN EXPERIENCE CONFIRMS MANY OF THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN THE REPORT.

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL NOTED THAT IN MANY ILO MEMBER COUNTRIES THE LABOR MINISTRIES ARE "POLITICALLY AND TECHNICALLY" WEAK RELATIVE TO OTHER NATIONAL AGENCIES, AND CONCLUDED THAT ILO FUNDS SHOULD BE USED TO HELP CORRECT THIS DEFICIENCY. THAT APPROACH SHOULD CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, STRENGTHEN TRIPARTITE PARTICIPATION IN THOSE ACTIVITIES, AND INCREASE FUNDING OF LABOR MINISTRIES ACTIVITIES FROM ALL SOURCES. IN THE UNITED STATES TRIPARTITE PARTICIPATION HAS UNQUESTIONABLY IMPROVED OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DECISION MAKING.

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT DESCRIBES THE ILO'S RECENT MEASURES TO DECENTRALIZE ADMINISTRATION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION. AS I MENTIONED, WE IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE FOUND THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING EFFORTS ARE IMPROVED BY LOCAL PARTICIPATION. WE HAVE LEARNED WE CANNOT DICTATE ALL PROGRAM DETAILS FROM WASHINGTON. THIS WAS NOT AN EASY CHANGE, BUT WE ARE CONVINCED THAT PROGRAM DECENTRALIZATION, WORKING WITHIN THE BROAD FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL POLICY, MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO MEET MORE EFFECTIVELY THE EMPLOYMENT

AND TRAINING NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE.

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT MENTIONS SEVERAL APPROACHES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION. I WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO COMMEND THE ILO'S EFFORTS IN THIS AREA. WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS IN THE EVALUATION OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND OTHER LABOR PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT OUR EVALUATION TECHNIQUES ARE STILL FAR FROM PERFECT. WE CONSIDER GOOD PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF OUR EFFORTS TO BE ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.

IN CONCLUSION, THERE IS STILL MUCH THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR COMMON OBJECTIVES OF PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS EVERYWHERE. WE ALL HAVE A VITAL INTEREST IN ALLOWING THE ILO TO PURSUE ITS IMPORTANT TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES. WE MUST RE-ESTABLISH THE ESSENTIAL

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PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE AND CREDIBLE ILO ACTION IN MATTERS CENTRAL TO ITS MAIN CONCERNS. IF WE DO SO, WE WILL PRESERVE AND GREATLY STRENGTHEN THIS VITAL ORGANIZATION. IF NOT, WE WILL SEVERELY UNDERMINE ITS CAPACITY TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS AND WELFARE OF WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THANK YOU.
END TEXT.SORENSEN

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